

San Diego Refugee Forum

Minutes

Tuesday, November 21, 2017 – 10:30 am to 12:00 pm
IRC – 5348 University Avenue, San Diego, CA 92105

1. *Call to order at 10:30 am*
2. *Executive Committee Announcements and Participate Introductions*
 - a. Rebecca Paida opened the Forum meeting.
 - b. Refugee Forum Officers Rebecca Paida (Chair), Oren Robinson (Treasurer), Madelyne Wagner (Interim Secretary) and Abdi Abdillahi (ex-officio) were in attendance.
3. San Diego Refugee Forum Officer Elections – Nominations Committee
 - a. Total of six nominees for the positions of Vice Chair and Secretary: Mejgan Afshan, Annie Gordon, Adeem Ismaeil, Christine Liboon, Jackie Mola and Dhaha Nur
 - b. Naming of the Member-at-Large position at the January Meeting
4. By-Law Changes – By-Laws Committee
 - a. The By-Laws Committee proposed five changes to the San Diego Refugee Forum's By-Laws, including:
 - i. Adding the Advocacy Task Force
 - ii. Increase membership dues
 - iii. Add section to include a definition of Ethnic Community-Based Organizations (ECBO)
 - iv. Reduce the membership dues for Ethnic Community-Based Organizations (ECBO) defined groups
 - v. Committee/Task Force Changes
5. *Task Force Updates*
 - a. **Advocacy Task Force:** The Advocacy Task Force is working with PANA to provide volunteers for the Refugee Renaissance event.
 - b. **Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force:** The Asylee/Asylum Seeker Task Force has been on hiatus for the year.
 - c. **Domestic Violence Task Force:** The Domestic Violence Task Force is seeking the support of the East County Domestic Violence Coalition.
 - d. **Employment Task Force:** The Employment Task Force will begin regular meetings in January.
 - e. **Health Task Force:** The Health Task Force had their last meeting of the year last Tuesday. The Health Task Force sent out a survey that is open to the entire Forum. The Task Force is seeking public opinion on a new meeting date, time and location as well as the types of presentations, projects and resources the community is interested in.
 - f. **World Refugee Day:** No update.
6. *Resettlement Agencies (formerly VOLAGs) Arrival Data and Updates*
 - a. **Alliance for African Assistance:** No update.
 - b. **Catholic Charities:** Catholic Charities has 32 arrivals for the month of October and expects 15 arrivals in the month of November.
 - c. **International Rescue Committee:** No update.
 - d. **Jewish Family Services:** Jewish Family Services has mostly assisted SIV cases for the months of October and November.
7. *County Agencies and Committees*
 - a. **County (Abdi Abdillahi):** The County has 95 arrivals for the month of October (72 Afghan, 4 Cuban, 9 Haitian, 6 Iraqi, 1 Mexican, and 3 Syrian). Out of the 95, only 8 had refugee status, 2 were asylees, 15 Cuban/Haitian and 72 SIV.
 - b. **State Advisory Committee (Mohammed Tuama):** The State Department approved 3,500 SIV cases for Afghans in addition to the already approved 10,000. The State Advisory Committee is holding elections on December 14th for the Chair and Vice Chair positions.
 - c. **Refugee Health (Christine Murto):** No update.

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8. *Focus Presentation: Center for World Music by James Gutierrez*
 - a. James Gutierrez provided an overview of Center for World Music and the programs they offer.
 - b. The PDF of the presentation can be found on the Refugee Forum website.
 - c. The Center for World Music is seeking to engage San Diego refugee/asylee artists for a Refugee Artist Series with the goal of educating the public on refugee experiences and contributions.
9. *Election Results*
 - a. *Mejgan Asfhan received the most votes, followed by Jackline Mola and Annie Gordan*
 - b. *All the proposed by-law changes were approved.*
10. *Community Updates:*
 - a. Karen Organization's Karen New Year will be held on January 13th at 9:30 AM at Crawford High School Auditorium. The event includes free food and performances.
 - b. Refugee Renaissance will be held on Sunday, December 3rd from 6:00 PM to 8:00 PM at the Mingeu International Museum in Balboa Park. RSVP @ Voices.PANASD.org
 - c. Catholic Charities will be premiering the documentary "The Right to Thrive" on Tuesday, November 28th at 3888 Paducah Drive, San Diego, CA at 6:00 PM.
 - d. Communities for Gateway Growth Grant Update: The grant funds a report that will include data and stories on how refugees and immigrants are integrating into the economy. The goal is to build a report with a series of recommendations for the Mayor and City Council to use as a planning document to better serve and integrate the refugee and immigrant community. The meetings will open up to the public next year.
 - e. There will be a Human Rights Day of Action on December 10th at the Waterfront Park from 3:30 PM to 5:00 PM.
 - f. The Council for American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) is offering Bystander and Ally training and scheduling these trainings for 2018.

Adjournment: 12:00 pm

Next Meeting: Tuesday, January 16, 2018